

Victoria Perez- Teacher Achievement First Bridgeport

In opposition to HB5078

The Common Core Standards bring back what I've experienced before as both a learner and teacher in the classroom- that less is more and depth over breadth matters. For example, in my classroom, the Common Core Math Standards have provided focus by narrowing the standards to the most important skills and concepts while creating coherence by aligning what I am teaching with previous and future grades in a logical progression. This has lifted the weight I felt rushing to teach everything that was required even when I knew I was skimming past the deep understanding necessary for college. As a result of the common core, there is finally enough time for my students to truly master mathematical ideas and concepts. In addition to providing focus and coherence, these standards also raise the bar for how my students interact with the content and demonstrate their mastery. It's one thing for my students to arrive at a solution to a problem, but a completely different and more empowering experience for them to justify and explain the solution- to answer the why and how they found their answer. I support the Common Core because it is empowering both teachers and students in the classroom.

These standards reinforce what excellent teachers nationwide have always believed, all students can achieve great things and it is our job to help them get there. Common Core helps all schools set high expectations for our students. That said, it is important to note that this transition will be challenging for teachers, school leaders, families and students alike. I sympathize with the skeptics. In the past, Connecticut's, lowest-common-denominator tests have failed to assess students preparation for the rigors of college and the modern workforce and as a result undermined public confidence in the value of testing. But we must move forward with optimism and empathy. This is not a time to assign blame or point fingers; it is a moment to harness our collective strength. It's a time to learn from past pitfalls and drive new innovation. The Common Core State Standards remind us what testing can do right by asking questions that demand critical thinking and creativity and ask students to write at length, show their work and explain their reasoning. In short, to pass a common core aligned assessment, students have to think and that is a beautiful thing.